DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 984 PS 020 616

TITLE Your Child Starts to School: A Guide for Parents.
INSTITUTION Virginia State Dept. of Education, Richmond.
PUB DATE Mar 91
NOTE 32p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Legislation; *Educational Objectives; *Kindergarten; *Kindergarten Children; *Parent Influence; Parent Participation; Parent Role; *Parents as Teachers; Parent School Relationship; Primary Education; *School Readiness; State Legislation; Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS *Virginia

ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to help parents make their children's first days in school successful and exciting. It also answers questions about school entrance requirements in Virginia and suggests ways parents can be involved in their children's education. The first sections offer information on entrance age and compulsory school age, requirements regarding physical examinations the child must receive before entering school, birth certificates, required immunizations, and social security numbers. In addition, guidance for parents whose children are on medication is provided. The next two sections focus on the characteristics and skill levels of kindergarten children and the broad goals and methods of kindergarten programs. Next, children's needs for good nutrition, sufficient rest, and exercise are stressed. A section on programs for children with disabilities is provided, followed by rules that parents should teach their children regarding walking home from school or the bus stop and riding the bus. The next sections offer tips on helping children get prepared for going to school, monitoring children's television viewing habits, engaging children in activities other than watching television, and demonstrating interest in children's school life. The booklet then highlights ways parents can become involved in their children's education as partners, collaborators, advisors, supporters, and audiences. Suggestions for parents who choose to volunteer assistance at their children's schools are provided. Finally, a school readiness checklist and a list of the objectives of kindergarten are presented. Reprints of Virginia school and health laws are appended. (AC)

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Your Child Starts To School

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A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

PS 020516

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Revised March 1991

INTRODUCTION

Your child soon will be taking a very eventful step in learning—entering school. Your understanding and support during this "transition" will strongly influence your child's attitude toward school now and in later years.

During the years before school, you have been your child's teacher, and your pupil has learned a great deal. During school years, you will continue to be very important to your child's education. Research shows that children perform best when their parents are involved in their school experience.

As a child starts to school, many changes will occur. From being one member of a family, the child now becomes a member of a group of children of the same age. Materials, toys, and adults' attention must be shared. A child's school experience will be affected by the ability to make these and many other adjustments.

This booklet is designed to help parents make their children's beginning school experience successful and exciting. It answers questions about requirements of school entrance and suggests ways parents can be involved in their children's education.

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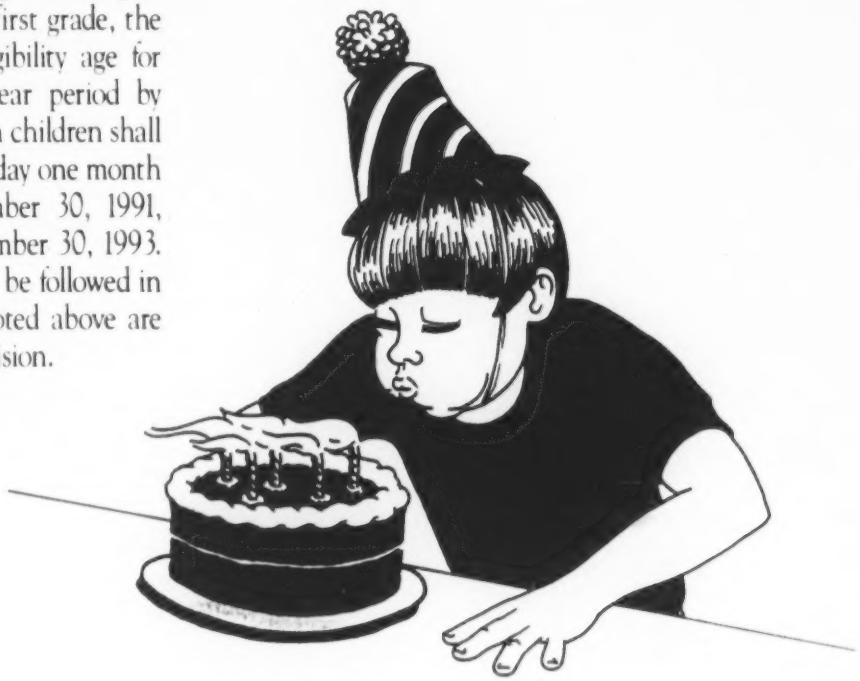
ENTRANCE AGE

Virginia school law states that children are of school age if they have reached their fifth birthday on or before the dates specified below. Unless a school division operates a two-tiered, junior, or other developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten program, or transitional first grade, the division must adjust the eligibility age for kindergarten over a three-year period by rolling back the date by which children shall have reached their fifth birthday one month each year as follows: November 30, 1991, October 31, 1992, and September 30, 1993. Guidelines and procedures to be followed in applying for the programs noted above are available from your school division.



COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

If your child is six years old by September 30, you must enroll your child in school.

Children entering school at age six may be tested by the local school division to determine appropriate grade placement.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Before entering school, it is important that your child receive a complete and thorough physical examination. The law requires that no child shall be admitted for the first time to any public school unless he/she has a report from a licensed physician of a complete physical examination or records establishing that such a report has been furnished upon prior admission to another school or school division.

The physical examination must be made by a physician within a year of entering school. If you do not have a regular physician, you may contact your health department.

Discuss your child's health with the doctor at the time of the examination. You, as a parent, can tell the doctor about your child's medical history. If physical defects are found and the doctor recommends that they be corrected, plan to have this done before your child enters school, if possible. Preschool examinations are of little value if the defects are not corrected. Each child deserves the opportunity to make the most progress possible in school, and a healthy body is important to achievement.

CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

Your child's birth certificate (or another acceptable document) must be presented before your child is enrolled in school. Birth certificates for children born in Virginia may be obtained by the parent or guardian by request/application from:

Bureau of Vital Records, Virginia State Health Department, P.O. Box 1000, Richmond, Virginia 23208

The application must include name of child, date and place of birth, and full name of the mother including maiden name. A check or money order of $5.00 must be enclosed with the application. DO NOT SEND CASH OR STAMPS.

Birth certificates may be obtained in person from:

Bureau of Vital Records, Virginia State Health Department
2nd Floor, Madison Building, 109 Governor Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219

If your child was born outside of the state of Virginia, contact the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state of your child's birth.

IMMUNIZATION

State law requires that parents have their children immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis), poliomyelitis, (before age one), measles (rubeola), German measles (rubella), and mumps (before age two). If this has not been done earlier, it must be done before the child begins school.

(continued)

IMMUNIZATION (cont.)

If a child has been immunized earlier, periodic boosters may be needed to maintain immunity to the various diseases. Your physician should be consulted to determine the booster needed. If you have no regular physician to give your child the immunizations and boosters, contact your local health department.

To attend school, the child must have proof of the following immunizations:

measles two doses after 12 months of age and before entering school.

mumps } one dose of each at age 15 months or older
rubella }

DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)–three doses, with one of the three given after age four; or four doses at any age.

polio–three doses.

Dates of immunizations must be provided to the school on the MCH 213B form signed by a physician.

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

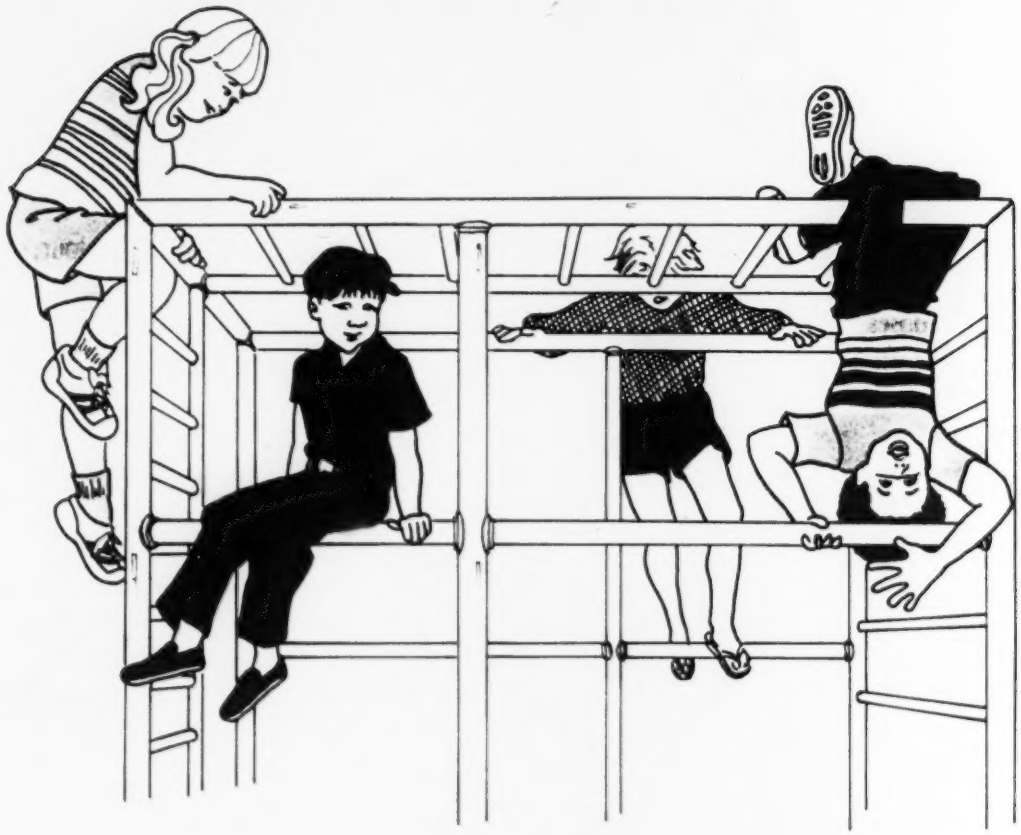
If your child is on medication, contact your school for its policy on administering medicine to children. Children should not carry medicine to school without the prior knowledge of school personnel. If medication has to be taken during school hours, it should be administered by school personnel (principal, teacher, or nurse).

The medication should be brought in its original container stating the dosage and method of administration as prescribed by the physician. A written request by the parent or guardian must accompany the medication. Some schools have a standard form for this purpose. The length of time the medicine is to be administered also should be reported.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

State law requires that all students enrolled in public schools have a federal social security number. To obtain a social security number for your child, you can write or call the Social Security Administration in your area for an application. Completed applications, an original copy of the birth certificate (not a photocopy), and one other document with the child's name recorded on it can be mailed to the Social Security Administration. An immunization report or an insurance policy is an acceptable document. The birth certificate will be returned to you with your child's social security number. You can also go to your local social security office to complete the application and present the birth certificate and second identifying document. Your child's social security number will then be mailed to you.

CHARACTERISTICS OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN



Motor Skills:

- Runs lightly on toes
- Walks on balance beam
- Skips on alternate feet
- Jumps rope
- Skates
- Rides bike
- Can throw and kick a ball
- Cuts out simple shapes
- Can manipulate crayons
- Can work puzzles
- Can print a few letters
- Has handedness well established
- Pastes and glues appropriately
- Can lace, button, zip

Communication Skills:

- Understands language
- Speaks in sentences which use many parts of speech
- Asks questions to gain information and understanding
- Can take turns in a conversation
- Gives and receives information
- Communicates well with family, friends, or strangers
- Talkative

(continued)

CHARACTERISTICS OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

Cognitive Development:

- Retells story from picture book with reasonable accuracy
- Enjoys humor, tricks, and jokes
- Paints and draws with an idea in mind
- Enjoys stories, singing, and poetry
- Names some letters and numerals
- Rote counts to 10
- Sorts objects by single characteristics
- Is beginning to use accurately time concepts of tomorrow and yesterday
- Attention span increases noticeably

Social Skills:

- Chooses own friends
- Plays simple table games
- Plays competitive games
- Enjoys playing with other children
- Enjoys dramatic play and pretend
- Experiences less conflict in group play
- Expects conformity among peers

Emotional Characteristics:

- Home-centered and interested in family relationships
- Embarrasses easily, especially when a mistake is made
- Does not like to repeat things
- Aware of right and wrong
- Independent, self-reliant, obedient, dependable, serene, happy, and proud
- Shows great affection toward adults
- Wants to please
- Uses verbal aggression when angry

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Kindergarten is an important part of the total school program. Broad goals of kindergarten are the same as other grades; namely, children will grow in all areas of development: physical, emotional, social, and intellectual. Although the goals are identical, kindergarten classrooms look quite different. In other grades, children's textbooks may be used extensively to teach subject matter. In kindergarten the content areas are integrated throughout the day so that children are actively involved in exploring their environment, manipulating objects, and interacting with children and adults. Most kindergartens have available to children:

learning centers so that children

- can work individually or in small groups
- can make choices among activities that are interesting to them
- can move about as they feel the need
- can work with real objects that are open-ended, stimulate thought, and promote problem-solving behavior.

small-group instruction so that children

- can participate in activities that meet their individual needs and in which they can experience success
- can interact with other children with similar interests and abilities.

whole-group activities so that children can

- listen to stories
- participate in movement and music activities
- share and discuss
- build group unity and spirit.

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HEALTH PRACTICES

Good nutrition is needed for the proper growth and development of your child because what a child eats and how often a child eats will affect the development of the mind and body. Children need a daily balanced diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, meats (poultry and fish), milk or milk products, bread, and cereal. Sweets, fats, and salty foods should be limited.

Growing childen need sufficient sleep and rest to enable them to grow physically and mentally. When they do not get enough rest, they are likely to become tired and may not be able to do their best work. They may become upset very easily. When children are tired, their defenses against diseases may be weakened, making them more subject to illnesses which cause absences from school.

Exercise is also important to the way children grow. Using all muscles daily helps children grow stronger and helps to improve mental alertness. Exercise on a regular basis may prevent chronic diseases in later life. Regular exercise also can assist in the prevention of obesity.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Children two through five years of age who have diagnosed developmental problems or disabling conditions may be eligible for special education services. If you suspect that your child is delayed in any area of development, you may request developmental screening through the school principal or the supervisor of special education to determine if further evaluation is necessary. Although the following may be found during a child's normal development, they may indicate more serious problems which should be discussed with school personnel:

- Slow or uneven rate of development
- Speech, hearing, or vision problems
- Behavioral or emotional difficulties
- Special health needs
- Delays in motor development (running, walking, jumping)

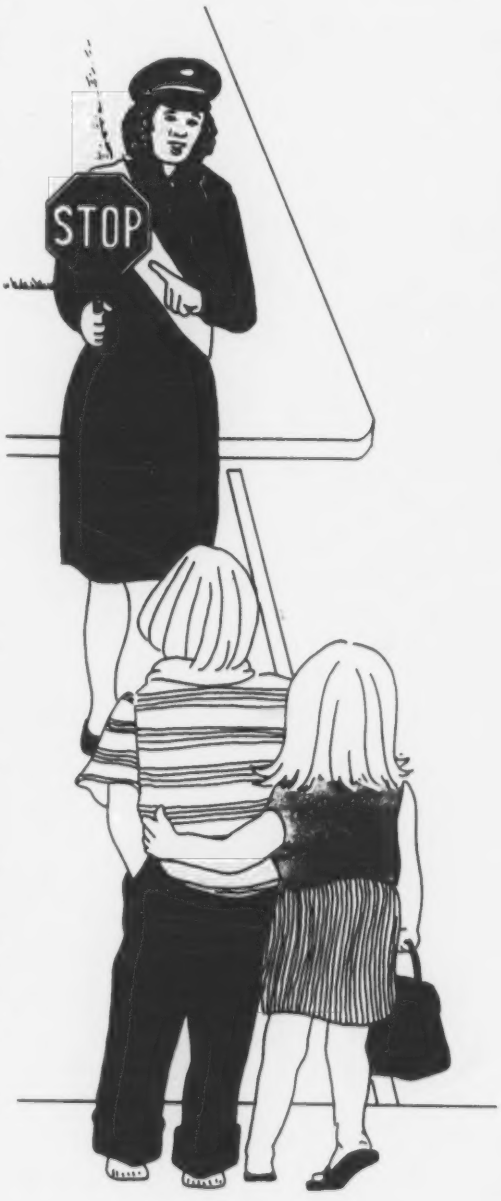
If your child has been identified as disabled, the administrator of special education in your school division should be contacted to assist in obtaining special services for your child.

TRANSPORTATION

The safety of children walking or riding a bus to school is a responsibility which is shared by school administrators, classroom teachers, pupils, school bus drivers, parents, and the motoring public. There are certain basic safety rules which children should know before attending school. It is important that you discuss these rules and help your child practice them before school starts. Help develop confidence, not fear; self-reliance, not dependency. All children should know the basic rules listed below:

A. Rules To Follow When Walking To Or From School Or The Bus Stop

1. *Leave home on time; hurrying can cause accidents.*
2. *Walk on the sidewalk whenever one is available; otherwise, walk on the left edge of the road facing traffic. Stay as far off the road as possible.*
3. *Watch for turning cars and cars coming out of driveways.*
4. *Cross at corners but only after carefully checking for approaching vehicles.*
5. *Obey all traffic lights and signs.*
6. *If a school safety patrol member or crossing guard is present, wait for a signal to cross.*
7. *Walk in single file or not more than two abreast.*
8. *Do not accept rides from strangers.*
9. *Do not cross lawns or leave litter.*



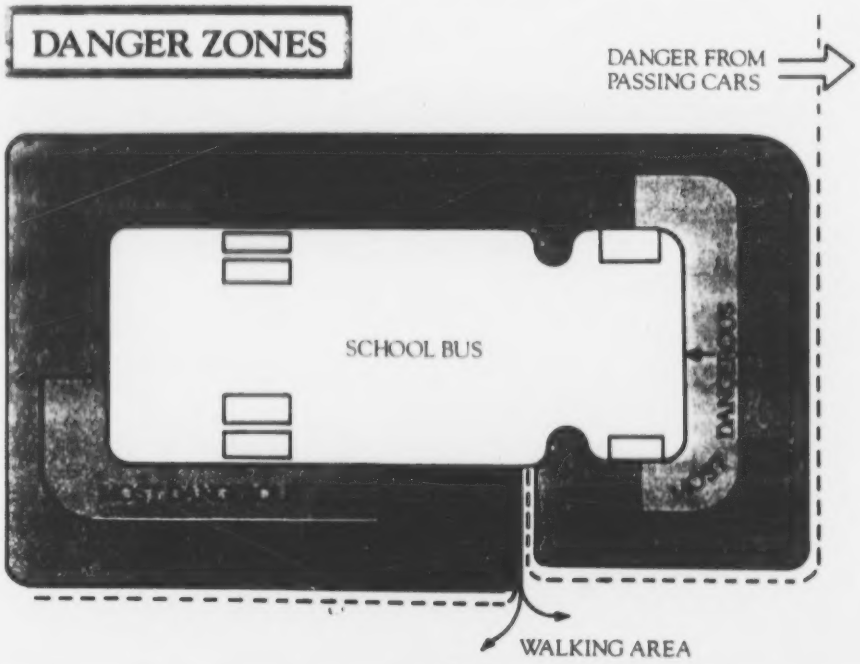
B. Rules For Bus Riders

1. *Waiting for the bus*
   - Do not play in the street or highway.
   - Stand back from the road.
   - Treat flowers, shrubbery, trees, lawns, and other property with care.
2. *Boarding a bus*
   - Form a single line and wait until the bus comes to a full stop. Do not crowd or push.
   - Check traffic in both directions.
   - When crossing the street or highway from the left side, wait until the bus driver signals you to cross.
   - Cross in front of the bus so that you can see the driver and the driver can see you.
   - When entering the bus, watch your step and use the handrail.

TRANSPORTATION (cont.)

3. *Riding the bus*
   - Remain seated.
   - Keep head, arms, hands inside the bus.
   - Do not talk to the driver except in an emergency.
   - Remain quiet, especially at railroad crossings, so that you do not distract the bus driver.
   - Obey the bus driver's directions promptly.
   - Never throw objects in or out of the bus.
   - Keep books and other personal articles in a book bag, handbag, or back pack.
4. *Leaving the bus*
   - Do not leave seat until the bus stops.
   - Move quickly but do not push.
   - Watch your step; use the handrail and take one step at a time.
   - Get away from loading zone quickly.
5. *Crossing road after leaving bus*
   - Walk 10 steps ahead of the bus along edge of street or highway.
   - Stop and wait for driver or patrol member to give a signal to cross.
   - Check the traffic both ways.
   - Cross the street or highway but do not run.

The area around the school bus is called the DANGER ZONE because it is very difficult, or impossible, for the driver to see small children who are close to the front, sides, and rear of the bus. Parents should observe and accompany their child to and from the bus stop as often as possible. This enables parents to ensure that their child follows the safety rules for bus riders.



BE PREPARED

School may hold great fears for the five-year-old child. Children have many ideas about school which may be far from true. They have heard exaggerated accounts from other children and have observed unreal situations on television. Children often have fears such as "I won't know where my room is," "I will not be able to go to the bathroom," or "The teacher will not like me."

If your child expresses fears, discuss the fears—do not pass them off. Try to answer questions in a reassuring way and let your child know that friendly people will help during the first uncertain days.

Parents can prepare their children for school by following these suggestions:

1. Talk about the friends your child will make and the things he/she will learn at school.

By discussing good things about school, children may look forward to, rather than fear, going to school.

2. Help your child accept people who are different.

School places children in contact with many people from various backgrounds, races, and cultures. Some children may attend school in wheel chairs; some may wear leg braces, glasses, or hearing aids. Some differences will be less apparent. Your child may like to discuss these differences with you. Remember that your acceptance of persons who are different will help your child live happily with others.

3. Be sure your child knows how to get to school and return home.

Sometimes children are afraid that they will get lost on the way to school or on the way home. To allay these fears, walk or drive with your child along the route that will be taken in walking or riding the bus to school.

4. **If your child must go to some place other than home after school, be sure this is understood by your child.**

Acting out going to school and returning home (or to the day care center/babysitter's house) often helps children feel comfortable about the new experience. When changes in your regular after-school arrangements occur, be sure to discuss these with your child and notify the school.

5. **If possible, visit the school with your child prior to the first day of school.**

This visit will help parents and children have a realistic picture of what school will be like.

6. **Teach your child his/her full name and, if possible, address and telephone number.**

This information will help children identify themselves to school personnel or others if an emergency arises.

7. **Teach your child good toilet habits.**

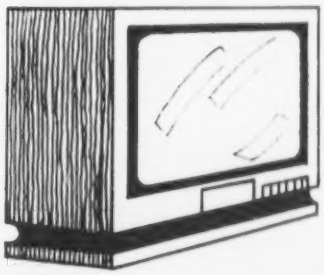
In practicing good health habits at school children need to be able to flush the toilet and wash their hands after using the bathroom.

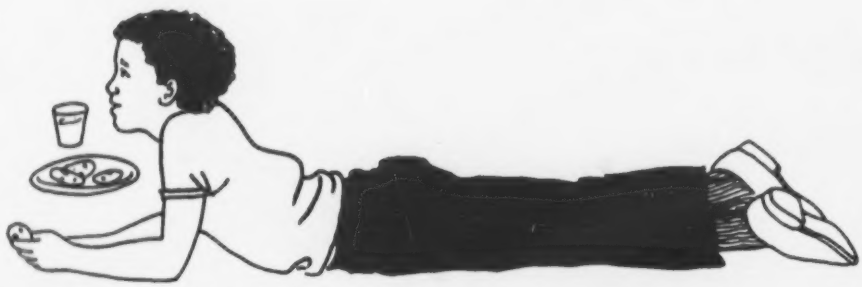
BE AWARE

Children of today have grown up watching television; it has become an accepted way of life. Parents should be aware of their children's viewing habits; what programs they are watching; and how much time they spend watching television.

Some television programs may be helpful and assist children in learning needed information. On the other hand, many programs present violence and other negative acts which may cause aggressive behavior in children. Excessive television viewing will rob children of time which should be spent in more productive activities. Young minds are challenged as they interact with *real* things; as they converse with people who have thoughts and feelings; and who personally respond to their questions. Their bodies develop as they run, climb, catch ball, etc. Creative abilities emerge when children have opportunities to make decisions and to begin and carry out activities.

Parents should start early to develop good viewing habits in their children. The following suggestions may be helpful:





1. **Know the programs your child selects.**

Some programs are not designed for children. If possible, watch television with your child and discuss programs and advertisements.

2. **Limit the amount of time your child views television.**

Some parents permit no television for children during week nights. Others allow children to watch one program for one hour daily. When you set limits, be sure they are clearly understood and stick to them.

3. **Be a model.**

Limit your own viewing time. This does not suggest that you limit yourself as rigidly as you do your child. Adults have different needs and activities; however, parents' actions have a strong influence on the thoughts and actions of children. Let your child see you enjoy reading and playing games, and it will have a positive influence on him/her.

Consider the following activities in place of some television viewing time:

1. Provide an active family life.

Plan activities the family can enjoy together, invite other children in, teach games to play alone or with others. Take your child on nature walks, discuss how people help each other, call attention to the beauty of the world around.

2. Talk with your child.

Television can be a thief of conversation. By limiting television viewing time, you are creating a setting which permits conversation. This will not only strengthen family ties, but will assist the child's language development.

3. Read and tell stories to your child.

Research shows that children who listen to stories become better readers than those who don't. Fifteen minutes a day set aside regularly to read to your child will pay rich dividends. Visit your public library and ask the children's librarian for assistance in selecting books and stories.

4. Encourage creative activities.

With planning, parents can provide art, music, and craft ideas to spark thinking and creativity. When both mother and father play with the child, the greatest benefit is gained.

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BE INTERESTED

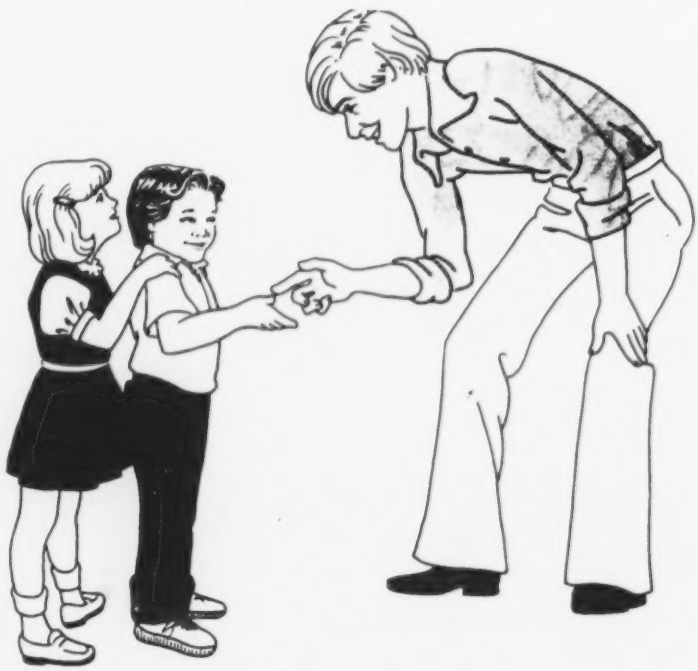
Parents are a key factor to children's success in school. Prior to school, children form many ideas and attitudes because of the models their parents have set. The following suggestions are given to remind you of ways you can show that you are interested in your child's school life:

1. Be sure you understand the school program.

Schools may have changed a great deal since you were a student. They may look different, use different equipment, and have a different schedule. Many changes have been based on information about how young children learn. Your child's school principal or teacher will be able to explain the program to you.

2. Listen when your child tells what happened at school.

School is a large part of children's lives; therefore, it is important that they talk about what they do and think. As you listen, you are showing your child that he/she is important and school is worth discussing. Remember, there are many opportunities for conversation—during dinner and bath or at bedtime.



3. Learn some of your child's friends by name.

Children's friends are important, and parents build their children's self-esteem as they show interest in their friends.

4. Be sure your child attends school regularly.

It is unfair to children to expect them to cope with the demands of school without regular attendance. Punctuality and regularity in attendance are important habits for children to develop.

5. Provide a place for things brought from school.

By providing a place to display your child's work, you are saying that the work is worthwhile and deserves notice.

6. Praise your child for effort.

Children need praise in order to believe in themselves and be motivated toward greater achievement.

7. Ask the teacher how you can help with the school program.

Young children usually are thrilled to have their parents assist their teacher. Ways parents can help are listed in this booklet.

8. Communicate with the school.

Communication between parents and school is essential and requires effort and cooperation from both parties. Schools use a variety of ways to communicate with parents which may include parent-teacher conferences, letters, report cards, newsletters, and scheduled school visitations. Parents can assist by:

- Providing information about your child
- Attending parent-teacher conferences
- Participating in parent-teacher organizations
- Supporting special school events

BE INVOLVED

Educating children is no easy task. Parents and classroom teachers are the prime educators, and each has unique responsibilities. They must work together for the best education possible. Parents can be involved in the education of their children in a variety of ways:

Parents as Partners

- attend parent conferences
- review children's homework
- listen to children read
- read to children
- accompany children on field trips

Parents as Supporters

- volunteer to assist teachers
- sponsor fund-raising events
- help other parents with after-school care, information sharing, homework hot-line, and support groups

Parents as Collaborators

- encourage children's school achievement
- help school personnel resolve children's learning or behavioral problems

Parents as Audience

- participate in school-sponsored activities

Parents as Advisors and Co-Decision Makers

- share ideas on policy and program decisions
- attend school board meetings
- serve on advisory councils

Parent volunteers enrich the kindergarten program by providing assistance to teachers in a variety of ways. Parents may volunteer to:

- Read to children
- Listen to children read
- Accompany children on field trips
- Write stories dictated by children
- Organize special projects
- Assist with housekeeping duties
- Perform clerical tasks
- Attend to special needs of students
- Assist with the breakfast program
- Share interests, skills, and talents

BE INVOLVED (cont.)

Consider the following suggestions before assisting in school:

1. Arrive promptly.
2. Call in advance if you are unable to keep an appointment.
3. Follow the teacher's directions.
4. Speak quietly and positively.
5. Be friendly.

Keep the following suggestions in mind when assisting in school:

1. Don't expect the teacher to talk to you while teaching the class.
2. Don't give too much attention to your own child.
3. Don't discuss school performance of other children.

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CHECKLIST

Have You Provided the Necessary Information for the School?

- ☐ Certification of Birth
- ☐ Physical Examination Report
- ☐ Immunization Certificate
- ☐ Special Needs of My Child
- ☐ Social Security Number
- ☐ Special arrangements for after-school care

Have You Helped Your Child Prepare for School?
Check Yourself...

- ☐ I have taught my child his/her name.
- ☐ I have taught my child to use the toilet alone.
- ☐ I have visited the school with my child.
- ☐ I have discussed safety rules with my child.
- ☐ I have discussed good things about the school.

After the First Month of School, Check Yourself...

- ☐ I listen when my child talks about school.
- ☐ I know some of my child's friends.
- ☐ I have found a place for my child to put school things.
- ☐ I have checked on my child's television viewing.
- ☐ I read to my child every day.
- ☐ I have found some way to be involved in my child's education.

KINDERGARTEN OBJECTIVES

Kindergarten is an important part of a child's school life. The kindergarten curriculum includes all content areas taught in the elementary school. It is presented not as isolated subjects but as experiences that develop concepts, foster skills, and lay sound foundations for future learning. As a result of planned experiences with concrete objects and interaction with peers and well-qualified adults, each child may:

Grow Emotionally and Demonstrate Growth By:

- Discovering self; likes, dislikes, attitudes, strengths, needs, and limitations
- Expressing thoughts and feelings
- Developing a feeling of security
- Facing problems and attempting to solve them
- Becoming more self-directed
- Seeking new experiences
- Persisting in efforts
- Exhibiting a strong desire to learn
- Realizing others are sources of help
- Showing concern for living things
- Assuming responsibility
- Increasing confidence in self

Grow Socially and Demonstrate Growth By:

- Cooperating with individuals and groups
- Sharing and taking turns
- Developing respect for the rights and feelings of others
- Participating in class activities
- Solving social problems without resorting to force
- Understanding the effect of behavior on an individual and the group
- Giving and accepting criticism
- Assuming leadership
- Appreciating differences among people
- Accepting limits involved with living in a democracy

KINDERGARTEN OBJECTIVES (cont.)

Grow in Ability to Communicate and Demonstrate Growth By:

- Talking and listening to children and adults
- Expressing needs, feelings, and desires
- Asking simple how, what, and why questions
- Gaining satisfaction in expressing ideas orally
- Telling an experience or a story in sequence
- Retelling stories
- Dictating original stories and poems
- Beginning to use illustrations and scribble writing to communicate ideas
- Expressing self through art and music
- Participating in dramatic play
- Following simple oral directions

Grow Physically and Demonstrate Growth By:

- Developing muscular control and coordination
- Participating in a balanced program of activity and relaxation
- Developing a sense of balance
- Identifying parts of the body
- Practicing good nutritional habits
- Maintaining good posture
- Recognizing safety hazards
- Using equipment safely
- Observing safety rules

Grow Aesthetically and Demonstrate Growth By:

- Experimenting with paints, crayons, clay, and other art media
- Enjoying the expression of thoughts and feelings through art forms
- Increasing awareness and appreciation of color, design, form, rhythm, and sound
- Telling about personal art experiences
- Singing simple songs and recognizing melodies
- Developing a sense of rhythm
- Appreciating beauty and understanding its contribution to daily life
- Becoming aware of and appreciating contributions of various individuals and cultures

KINDERGARTEN OBJECTIVES (cont.)

Grow Intellectually and Demonstrate Growth By:

- Developing concepts
- Beginning to observe, inquire, infer, predict, and draw conclusions
- Striving to solve problems
- Expressing curiosity about the environment
- Grouping objects by use or similarity
- Evidencing pleasure in discovery
- Becoming aware of the natural environment
- Recognizing familiar objects as models and real objects
- Realizing that books and words have meaning
- Developing visual discrimination
- Learning to discriminate rhythms, sounds, and origin of sounds
- Identifying various tastes and odors
- Identifying objects and their properties by touch
- Becoming aware of left-right progression
- Becoming aware of the concept of position
- Enjoying a variety of stories and poems, including nursery rhymes
- Beginning to understand the difference between reality and fantasy
- Becoming aware of alphabet names and sounds
- Understanding the variety of roles people in the home, school, and community play
- Learning about holidays and festivals
- Beginning to understand the use of economics in everyday life
- Ordering objects
- Beginning to recognize, compare, and construct sets
- Understanding one-to-one relationships
- Beginning to recognize sizes, shapes, and patterns
- Becoming familiar with numerals
- Using numbers in everyday work and play

APPENDIX

VIRGINIA SCHOOL LAWS

§ 22.1-1. **Definitions.** — As used in this title unless the context requires otherwise or it is otherwise specifically provided:

1. *"Board"* or *"State Board"* means the Board of Education.
2. *"Division superintendent"* means the division superintendent of schools of a school division.
3. *"Elementary"* includes kindergarten.
4. *"Person of school age"* means a person who will have reached his fifth birthday on or before September 30 of the school year and who has not reached twenty years of age on or before August first of the school year.
5. *"School board"* means the school board of a school division. (1980, c. 559; 1985, c. 407.)

§ 22.1-3. **Persons to whom public schools shall be free.** — The public schools in each school division shall be free to each person of school age who resides within the school division; provided, however, that a school board may withdraw a child from kindergarten until the following school year upon the recommendation of the principal of the school the child attends and with the consent of the child's parent or guardian. Every person of school age shall be deemed to reside in a school division when he or she is living with a natural parent, a parent by legal adoption, or when the parents of such person are dead, a person in loco parentis, who actually resides within the school division, or when the parents of such person are unable to care for the person and the person is living, not solely for school purposes, with another person who (i) resides in the school division and (ii) is the court-appointed guardian, or has legal custody, of the person, or when the person is living in the school division not solely for school purposes, as an emancipated minor. (Code 1950, § 22-218; 1954, c. 638; 1958, c. 628; 1968, c. 178; 1972, c. 245; 1976, cc. 681, 713; 1978, c. 518; 1980, cc. 559, 576; 1981, cc. 341, 342.)

ARTICLE 1.

Programs and Courses of Instruction Generally.

§ 22.1-199. **Kindergarten programs suitable for certain children.** — A. The kindergarten program in each school division shall include a program suitable for children who will reach their fifth birthday on or before September 30 of the school year.* The school board's plan for such program shall be furnished to the Board of Education and shall include the following:

1. A statement of purpose and objectives of the kindergarten program that reflects consideration of the different readiness and maturity levels of children in the program;
2. A description of the organization, scheduling and staffing of the program that reflects a responsiveness to the needs of the children of the age span to be served in the program;
3. Evidence that the program plan was developed by a committee that included early childhood specialists, parents, teachers and administrators;
4. Scheduling and an agenda of inservice activities for kindergarten teachers to insure adequate preparation for the program;

*See section C on page 25.

5. A plan for the interface of the kindergarten program with the primary program to allow for continuous progress;

B. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall disseminate to the school divisions information concerning the ages when children are required or eligible to attend school. Each school division shall disseminate such information to parents of such children of such ages upon or prior to enrollment of such children in the public schools of the division.

C. The age requirements set forth in subsection A of this section shall not affect the operation of any two-tiered, junior or other developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten program or transitional first grade. In those school divisions implementing such programs, children whose fifth birthday occurs between October 1 and December 31 of the school year may be enrolled in kindergarten after an appropriate readiness evaluation has demonstrated that attendance in these programs will educationally benefit such children. (Code 1950, § 22-218.1:1; 1978, c. 518; 1980, cc. 559, 570; 1985, c. 407; 1990, c. 792.) . . . school boards shall phase in the rollback of the eligibility age for kindergarten over a three-year period by rolling the date by which children shall have reached their fifth birthday back one month each year as follows: November 30, 1991, October 31, 1992, and September 30, 1993.

§ 22.1-254. Ages of children required to attend. — Every parent, guardian, or other person in the Commonwealth having control or charge of any child who will have reached the fifth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year and who has not passed the eighteenth birthday shall, during the period of each year the public schools are in session and for the same number of days and hours per day as the public schools, send such child to a public school or to a private, denominational or parochial school or have such child taught by a tutor or teacher of qualifications prescribed by the Board of Education and approved by the division superintendent or provide for home instruction of such child as described in § 22.1-254.1.

§ 22.1-256. Children exempted from article. — A. The provisions of this article shall not apply to:

1. Children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases while suffering from such diseases;

1a. Children whose immunizations against communicable diseases have not been completed as provided in § 22.1-271.2;

2. Children under ten years of age who live more than two miles from a public school unless public transportation is provided within one mile of the place where such children live;

3. Children between ten and seventeen years of age who live more than 2½ miles from a public school unless public transportation is provided within 1½ miles of the place where such children live;

4. Children excused under § 22.1-257 of this article;

5. Any child who will not have reached his sixth birthday on or before September 30 of each school year whose parent or guardian notifies the appropriate school board that he does not wish the child to attend school until the following year;

6. Any child withdrawn from kindergarten as provided in § 22.1-3 until the school year following the withdrawal.

B. The distances specified in paragraphs A 2 and A 3 of this section shall be measured or determined from the entrance to the school grounds or the school bus stop nearest the entrance of the residence of such children by the nearest practical routes which are usable for walking or riding. Disease shall be established by the certificate of a reputable practicing physician in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board of Education. (Code 1950, § 22-275.3; 1959. Ex. Sess., c. 72; 1968, c. 178; 1975, c. 558; 1976, cc. 681, 713; 1978, c. 518; 1980, c. 559; 1981, c. 540; 1985, c. 407.)

ARTICLE 2.

Health Provisions.

§ 22.1-270. **Preschool physical examinations.** — A. No pupil shall be admitted for the first time to any public kindergarten or elementary school in a school division unless such pupil shall furnish, prior to admission, (i) a report from a qualified licensed physician of a comprehensive physical examination of a scope prescribed by the State Health Commissioner performed no earlier than twelve months prior to the date such pupil first enters such public kindergarten or elementary school or (ii) records establishing that such pupil furnished such report upon prior admission to another school or school division and providing the information contained in such report.

B. The physician making a report of a physical examination required by this section shall, at the end of such report, summarize the abnormal physical findings, if any, and shall specifically state what, if any, conditions are found that would identify the child as handicapped.

C. Such physical examination report shall be placed in the child's health record at the school and shall be made available for review by any employee or official of the State Department of Health or any local health department at the request of such employee or official.

D. Such physical examination shall not be required of any child whose parent or guardian shall object on religious grounds and who shows no visual evidence of sickness, provided that such parent or guardian shall state in writing that, to the best of his knowledge, such child is in good health and free from any communicable or contagious disease.

E. The health departments of all of the counties and cities of the Commonwealth shall conduct such physical examinations for medically indigent children without charge upon request and may provide such examinations to others on such uniform basis as such departments may establish.

F, G. [Repealed.]

H. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any child who was admitted to a public school prior to July 1, 1972.

I. Parents or guardians of entering students shall complete a health information form which shall be distributed by the local school divisions. Such forms shall be developed and provided jointly by the Department of Education and Department of Health, or developed and provided by the school division and approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Such forms shall be returnable within fifteen days of receipt unless reasonable extensions have been granted by the superintendent or his designee. Upon failure of the parent or

guardian to complete such form within the extended time, the superintendent may send to the parent or guardian, written notice of the date he intends to exclude the child from school. (Code 1950, § 22-220.1; 1972, c. 761; 1973, c. 300; 1974, c. 160; 1979, cc. 120, 260; 1980, c. 559; 1982, c. 510; 1983, c. 195; 1985, c. 334.)

§ **22.1-271.2. Immunization requirements.** — A. No student shall be admitted by a school unless at the time of admission the student or his parent or guardian submits documentary proof of immunization to the admitting official of the school or unless the student is exempted from immunization pursuant to subsection C. If a student does not have documentary proof of immunization, the school shall notify the student or his parent or guardian (i) that it has no documentary proof of immunization for the student; (ii) that it may not admit the student without proof unless that student is exempted pursuant to subsection C; (iii) that the student may be immunized and receive certification by a licensed physician or an employee of a local health department; and (iv) how to contact the local health department to learn where and when it performs these services. Neither this Commonwealth nor any school or admitting official shall be liable in damages to any person for complying with this section.

Any physician or local health department employee performing immunizations shall provide to any person who has been immunized or to his parent or guardian, upon request, documentary proof of immunizations conforming with the requirements of this section.

B. Any student whose immunizations are incomplete may be admitted conditionally if that student provides documentary proof at the time of enrollment of having received at least one dose of the required immunizations accompanied by a schedule for completion of the required doses within ninety days.

The immunization record of each student admitted conditionally shall be reviewed periodically until the required immunizations have been received.

Any student admitted conditionally and who fails to comply with his schedule for completion of the required immunizations shall be excluded from school until his immunizations are resumed.

C. No certificate of immunization shall be required for the admission to school of any student if (i) the student or his parent or guardian submits an affidavit to the admitting official, stating that the administration of immunizing agents conflicts with the student's religious tenets or practices; or (ii) the school has written certification from a licensed physician or a local health department that one or more of the required immunizations may be detrimental to the student's health, indicating the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstance that contraindicates immunization.

D. The admitting official of a school shall exclude from the school any student for whom he does not have documentary proof of immunization or notice of exemption pursuant to subsection C.

E. Every school shall record each student's immunizations on the school immunizatior. record. The school immunization record shall be a standardized form provided by the State Department of Health, which shall be a part of the mandatory permanent student record. Such record shall be open to inspection by officials of the State Department of Health and the local health departments.

F. The requirement for mumps immunization as provided in § 32.1-46 shall not apply to any child admitted for the first time to any grade level, kindergarten through grade twelve, of a school prior to August 1, 1981.

G. The Board of Health shall promulgate rules and regulations for the implementation of this section in congruence with rules and regulations of the Board of Health promulgated under § 32.1-46 and in cooperation with the Board of Education. (1982, c. 510; 1983, c. 433; 1988, c. 216.)

APPENDIX

VIRGINIA HEALTH LAWS

§ 32.1-46. Immunization of children against certain diseases. — A. The parent, guardian or person standing in loco parentis of each child within this Commonwealth shall cause such child to be immunized by vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and poliomyelitis before such child attains the age of one year, against Haemophilus influenzae type b before he attains the age of thirty months, and against measles (rubeola), German measles (rubella) and mumps before such child attains the age of two years. All children shall also be required to receive a second dose of measels (rubeola) vaccine prior to entering kindergarten or first grade (in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Health). The parent, guardian or person standing in loco parentis may have such child immunized by a physician or may present the child to the appropriate local health department which shall administer the required vaccines without charge.

B. A physician or local health department administering a vaccine required by this section shall state the diseases for which the child has been immunized, the numbers of doses given, the dates when administered and any further immunizations indicated.

C. The vaccines required by this section shall meet the standards prescribed in, and be administered in accordance with, regulations of the Board.

D. The provisions of this section shall not apply if:

1. The parent or guardian of the child objects thereto on the grounds that the administration of immunizing agents conflicts with his religious tenents or practices, unless an emergency or epidemic of disease has been declared by the Board, or

2. The parent or guardian presents a statement from a physician licensed to practice medicine in Virginia which states that the physical condition of the child is such that the administration of one or more of the required immunizing agents would be detrimental to the health of the child.

§ 32.1-47. Exclusions from school of children not immunized. — Upon the identification of an outbreak, potential epidemic or epidemic of a vaccine-preventable disease in a public or private school, the Commissioner shall have the authority to require the exclusion from such school of all children who are not immunized against that disease. (1979, c. 711.)

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